

**Nassau Suffolk Catholic High School
Athletic Association**

SAINT ANTHONY'S HIGH SCHOOL
275 Wolf Hill Road
South Huntington, New York 11747-1394

(831) 271-2020

November 30, 2006

Mr. Steve Matteo,
Chief of Staff
Council Member Jane Oddo
94 Lincoln Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10306

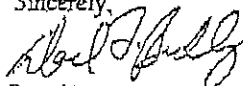
Dear Mr. Matteo:

The Nassau Suffolk Catholic High School Athletic Association had been interested in becoming a wood bat only baseball league for a number of years. After many meetings and discussions, it was decided we would adopt wood bats beginning in the Spring of 2006. Our league consists of 7 Catholic High Schools in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Each of these schools has a Varsity and JV team and 4 of the schools have a Freshman team. All together we have approximately 400 students playing baseball in our league. Our first year has been a complete success. Quite honestly, many of our coaches feel that baseball is being played the way it was supposed to be played. The games are close and very exciting. We believe that at any given time any team can beat the other. In fact, the 6th place team at the end of our regular season won our League Tournament. Coaches are on their toes with every pitch. With the aluminum bat, many players were looking to just hit home runs. With wood bats, players look to get solid hits and the art of bunting has been rediscovered.

We are very proud of our decision and confident that in the long run, it is in the best interest of the children and baseball to continue using the wood bats. One of our League coaches, John Habyan of St. John the Baptist High School in West Islip, played professional baseball for a number of years and ended his career with the New York Yankees, is in favor of using wood bats because of the success we have had.

If you have any questions please feel free to call me. You have our total support in this endeavor.

Sincerely,


Donal F. Buckley
President

PROSPECT PARK BASEBALL ASSOCIATION
WOOD BAT POLICY
(BASEBALL ONLY)

If you listen closely in Prospect Park next spring, you will hear more of a satisfying "crack" than a hollow "ping" when young players from one of the largest baseball organizations in New York City take the field.

The Prospect Park Baseball Association (PPBA) has voted to have players in its Super Bantam (13U), Grasshopper (14U), and Freshmen (16U) baseball divisions use wood bats only. Metal bats in these divisions are no longer allowed.

The PPBA's new policy will not apply to players in the Cub (10U) and Bantam (12U) divisions, who will continue to be allowed to use non-wood bats. Of course, players in these divisions also have the option to use wood if they prefer. The PPBA's youngest divisions, Pony (8U) and Pee Wee (6U) have long been wood-only divisions and will continue that tradition. Girls Softball divisions will not be affected by this decision.

Across the country, the debate over traditional wood bats versus metal bats has been going on for several years. Several high-profile cases of serious injuries caused to young players related to the use of metal bats has sparked many communities to consider returning to the sport's roots -- wood bats.

Locally, the New York City Council is considering a bill aimed at outlawing the use of metal bats in the city's high schools. These are the same children for which the new PPBA policy of wood bats applies. Proposal 341-A, as it is known, states, "...the trend toward the use of new high performance materials in the construction of metal baseball bats has dramatically increased the speed at which baseballs are propelled off bats. Such increase in speed has shortened the necessary reaction time needed by defensive players in the field, placing players in compromising and dangerous positions." It goes on to state "...the use of non-wood bats places children, particularly those of high school age, at an unacceptable risk of injury."

The PPBA has decided to roll out a partial conversion to wood in 2007 for three important reasons:

First, the greatest concern about the increased risk of injury to players using metal versus wood bats lies with older players, who hit the ball harder than younger players.

Second, there is the issue of economics. Metal bats are more expensive to buy than wood bats, often costing over \$100 a bat, but they last longer, usually for years. Wood bats are less expensive, but they break and need to be replaced more often than metal bats. Our Cub and Bantam divisions have the greatest number of players, and would require the greatest increase in cost for each of the member organizations in the PPBA to replace all their metal bats with wood. However, if the change to wood bats in the older divisions in 2007 is a success PPBA will consider a league-wide move to wood bats in 2008.

Third, there are a lot of families who will be happy to return to the traditional roots of the game. Many coaches & fans alike believe that the game is just more fun played with wood bats, giving kids a better chance at fielding the ball, which often leads to closer, more exciting games.

If the conversion to wood bats in the older divisions in 2007 proves successful, the PPBA will reconsider a league-wide move to wood in 2008. Organizations that play in the PPBA league include: 78th Precinct Youth Council, St. Francis Xavier Youth Sports, Camp Friendship, Holy Name Fathers Guild, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Brooklyn Angels, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Sacred Heart Youth Program and South Brooklyn Youth Organization.

11/06



Garden City Athletic Association
P.O. Box 4, Garden City, NY 11530
www.gc-aa.com

January 2007

To: Parents of Players in the GCAA Baseball and Softball Program
From: The GCAA Board of Directors
Re: **Our Decision to Switch to Wood Bats**

At the outset, we must state the obvious: The GCAA can **never** guarantee that the sports we administer will be 100% risk-free. No one can guarantee this. Things happen and injuries occur, no matter how many precautions are taken.

The debate over the issue of the safety of metal bats has received much attention over the years. Introduced in the mid-1970s as a cheaper, more durable alternative to wood, metal bats became increasingly potent, constructed of advanced alloys enclosing pressurized air chambers. On one side of the debate are many coaches, players, league administrators and others who would argue that these powerful bats are placing pitchers and fielders at undue risk and changing the game for the worse. On the other side are bat manufacturers, and other coaches, administrators and observers, who counter that the metal bats are perfectly safe and that the extra power they provide isn't such a bad thing.

The scientific evidence is not extensive but what research has been done supports the proposition that, all others factors being equal, baseballs hit off of a metal bat travel at a substantially higher velocity than balls hit off of wood bat. One such study was conducted by researchers at Brown University and another was conducted by the Baum Research and Development Company of Traverse City, Michigan. The Baum study also suggests that non-wood bats not only generate greater exit speeds, but also contain a larger "sweet spot," which means that a batter can drive a ball back into the field even when hitting the ball near the handle or the end of the bat. The Baum study contends that a larger "sweet spot" results in an increased number of hard-hit balls, and thus an increase in the risk of injury to pitchers and fielders.

The statistical evidence, while not precise because youth league baseball injuries are not reliably reported and compiled, further support this proposition. A New Jersey legislator who recently introduced a bill to impose a statewide ban on metal bats (more about this in a moment) cited the unfortunate statistic that between 1991 and 2001, 15 players were killed by balls from bats determined to be made of non-wood aluminum while only two fatal incidents involved wood bats.

The *anecdotal evidence* is no less compelling. Support for New Jersey's law banning metal bats, which is now before the full State Assembly, was spurred on by the tragic case of a Wayne, New Jersey 12 year-old boy, Steven Domalewski, who was struck in the chest by a line drive off of a metal bat while pitching in a Little League game in June of this year, sending him into cardiac arrest. Three spectators rushed onto the field and resuscitated him, but the damage was done. He suffered brain swelling and went into a coma. Four months later, he was still unable to talk or see. Recently, a similar bill to ban metal bats was introduced in the New York City Council. Testifying before the committee considering the bill was a Montana mother, Debbie Patch, whose son, Brandon, died in 2003 after being hit in the temple by a ball off of a metal bat.

Even if most games proceed without incident or injury, and any injuries suffered are not as tragic as these,

anyone who has been around youth baseball games has undoubtedly witnessed his or her share of frightening incidents involving line drives rocketed back toward the pitcher. Still, ***Little League Baseball, Inc.***, the organization based in Williamsport, Pa. that charts and oversees our program and 7,400 other programs like ours around the world, ***opposes a ban*** on metal bats, stating that rules requiring that the specifications of metal bats be similar to wood bats have negated any safety issues. Some of these specifications, incidentally, will not be effective until the 2009 season.

After careful consideration and review of the issues, we, the GCAA Board, have decided that we respectfully disagree with our colleagues at ***Little League Baseball, Inc.***, though we believe their opinion to be sincere and well-intentioned. Our responsibility, first and foremost, is to the children who participate in our programs. While we cannot make our programs risk-free, we can, ***and must***, take all necessary steps to eliminate what we believe are the very real risks presented by metal bats.

It boils down to this: Every split-second matters. The ball comes off the bat at a high rate of speed directly toward the young pitcher standing a mere 46 feet away (and, actually, even closer than that, having completed his follow-through off the pitching rubber as he releases the ball toward the batter). Requiring that the bat be made of wood, not metal, will, in our opinion, give our young pitcher ***more split-seconds*** to react and avoid being hit.

In reaching this decision, we realize that we are acting as trailblazers -- but we are encouraged that we are not alone. There seems, in fact, to be a growing movement afoot back to wood bats. New Jersey and New York City would not, for example, be the only municipalities that ban metal bats if their bills become law. Illinois high schools have started a pilot program to test wood bats; North Dakota high school teams plan to switch to wood next year, and Massachusetts Catholic high school baseball teams have used only wood bats since 2003. Locally, the Nassau-Suffolk Catholic High School Athletic Association, which includes Chaminade, switched last year to being a "wood bat only" league. And there are several other Little League programs like ours that have decided to use wood bats only. (We are not, by the way, in violation of Little League rules in using wood bats. Section 1.10 of the rules permits the use of bats made of wood or of other material acceptable to Little League standards.).

Of course, we hope that everyone's decision turns out to be correct: That those leagues that decide to continue to use metal bats, as well as those like ours that switch to wood, suffer no more tragedies. We believe, however, that ***our decision to act now*** is proper and prudent for the participants in our GCAA program. ***Inaction is not an option.*** As stated very well by the accomplished and notable Queens high school baseball coach, Jack Curran, who is also a wood bat advocate, in a recent New York Times article describing his frustration with those who oppose any action banning metal bats: "Someday, somebody's going to get killed. It will be like after a kid gets hit by a car at the corner. Then they put in a red light."

* * *

A final word about the game itself and how it may change: Some parents and players might be disappointed if the switch to wood results in fewer long-balls and hard line drives, especially as the kids get accustomed to using wood bats. Many baseball observers and experts will argue, on the other hand, that it is a better game played with wood, and that a greater emphasis will be placed on kids' learning fundamental skills. The web site ***"Real Players Hit With Wood"*** (www.baseballtips.com/wood.html) states, for example, that "training with wood forces the player to become mechanically precise and builds bat speed and strength."

We believe it will be a better game ***and*** a safer game. Who would argue with this winning combination?



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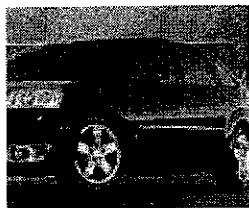
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The Record

Friday, December 22, 2006

By MATTHEW VAN DUSEN
STAFF WRITER

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WYCKOFF -- Township recreation officials have banned aluminum and non-wood baseball bats from the youth baseball league to protect players from high-speed line drives like the one that almost killed a Wayne boy last summer.

The recreation advisory board had discussed the move for a while but acted after a drive off an aluminum bat struck 12-year-old Steven Domalewski of Wayne in the chest in June and stopped his heart.

"We thought there was a need [for us] to be pioneers in this area," board President Rich Weiner said.

The baseball league comprises 700 boys in Grades 2 to 8.

Wyckoff's switch comes as the state Legislature mulls a ban on non-wood bats -- including aluminum, titanium and other alloys -- in most organized games involving children under 18.

A legislative committee moved the bill with a favorable recommendation in October, but township recreation Director Andy Wingfield and the advisory board chose not to wait for a vote on the bill.

Wingfield, an assistant baseball coach at Ramapo High School in Franklin



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Lakes, said he has seen two young players hurt by line drives over the past five or six years.

A report from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission found that, between 1991 and 2001, eight players were struck and killed by drives from non-wood bats, two from wood bats and seven from bats whose composition was not known.

"You hear at least one story every year about a kid that gets a ball to the chest," Wingfield said.

Domalewski was pitching when a ball hit him and stopped his heart, depriving his brain of oxygen. He was in a coma for much of the summer.

Several coaches and Little League officials told the legislative safety committee at a hearing in October that the ban is unnecessary since injuries are rare and children will leave the sport if they have to use wooden bats, which have smaller "sweet spots."

Wingfield said the traveling teams will still use aluminum bats at practices and in games since most leagues have not introduced similar bans.

The township advisory board also decided not to extend the bat ban to girl's softball, where serious injuries are rarer.

The recreation committee spent \$1,800 on 104 wooden bats for its baseball teams and will store or donate its aluminum bats, said Wingfield.

Jim Madormo, the township's baseball commissioner, said his eighth-grade son is looking forward to hearing the sound of the wood bat. "Young kids now never played with wood bats. They think it's different," Madormo said.

The township's baseball season begins April 14.

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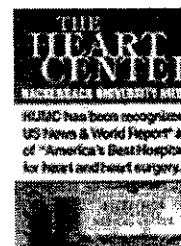
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Montvale Athletic League: Baseball

Commissioner: Alan Weinstein

baseball@montvaleathleticleague.com

Baseball News and Events:

- **[Rules and Guidelines](#)** for MAL Baseball.

- **[Schedules, Stats, etc.](#)** for MAL Baseball.

- **Wooden Bats in 2007**

One of the goals of the MAL is to do everything within our means to ensure the safety of your children. To that end, we will be instituting a wood bat only rule for the 2007 baseball season. This will encompass all levels, from T-ball thru Seniors.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact **[Alan Weinstein](#)**.



Baseball Mission:

Our baseball program is one of service to the youth of Montvale. The program is dedicated to teaching children how to play and enjoy the game of baseball. Teamwork, good sportsmanship, self-discipline, and building self-esteem are the primary goals.